

# Tips for Teens Writing a Children's Picture Storybook

## Definition

- A children's picture storybook is a work written for children that uses both words and pictures to tell a simple story.

## Format

- Most picture books average 30 pages and are made up of 14 to 16 two-page spreads (the two facing pages of an open book).

## Overall Tips

- A children's picture book should be organized into short, simple sentences and short paragraphs.
- Use strong action words to keep the story vivid in the reader's mind ("The girl jumped and laughed" is probably better than "The girl is happy").
- Use the sound of words to make the story come to life. Children love to hear repetition, rhyme, and other language sounds.
- Repeating a phrase throughout a story ("And the mouse still didn't have any cheese" at the end of every page) can help hold a reader's attention.
- Use a question at the end of a page ("And what did the monkey find under that rock?") to help move your reader to the next page.

## Pictures

- Many children's books have a vivid and attractive picture on the front cover that introduces the reader to the main character or problem in the story.
- Pictures are usually created after the story is written.
- Use pictures to help readers understand the words in the story.

## Characters

- The main character should have one or two personality traits that children can relate to easily.
- Use words and pictures to get the characters' personality across to the reader.
- Try not to use long lists of details to describe a character.
- Decide whether the main character will stay the same or change as the story goes on.

## Plot/Story

- A well-designed plot or story is essential to a good children's book.
- Limit your story to one main problem the character has to overcome.
- Some of the common themes that authors build children's stories around are being accepted by others, what it's like being in a family, growing up, and being afraid of something that's new or unknown.
- Children's books usually try to teach a positive lesson, but most do not mention the lesson directly. The lesson is often made clear through the good and bad outcomes of the choices a character makes.

## Setting

- Make the time and place of a story clear to help readers imagine where everything is happening.
- Children can be entertained equally well by stories set in very familiar places and far away, exotic places.
- Setting a story in an unfamiliar location can be a great way to get a reader to ask lots of questions.